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Pulpit Preaching

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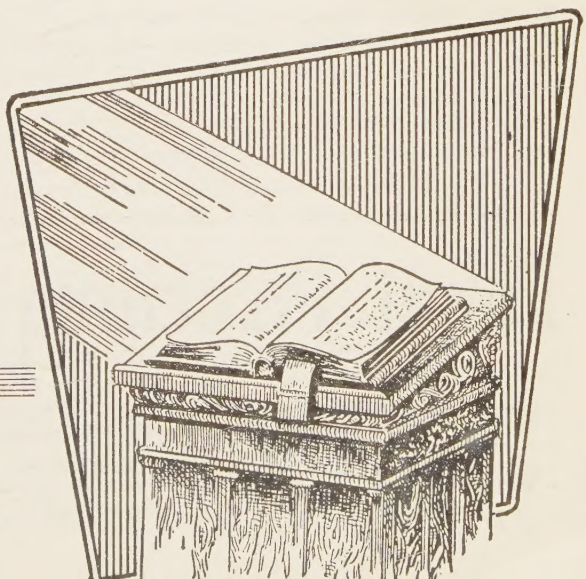

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's single preaching emphasis concerns "Persistence in Prayer" and offers suggestions about the meaning and nature, mood and manner, and disciples of prayer. A stimulating article on the psychology of the sermon, "The Intellectual and Emotional Appeals of the Sermon," has been written by Dr. Joseph H. Baccus, professor of speech at the University of Redlands and minister of the church in Perris, near Redlands, California.

Next month's sermon themes will be "How Large Is Your God?" and "Old Testament Heroes." The September themes will be "Table of the Lord" and "Great Words of Faith: Salvation."

—o—

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

A Treasury of Story-Sermons for Children, edited by Charles L. Wallis, is an anthology of 114 story-sermons by 74 authors. All of the major teaching emphases of the church are included under such division headings as "Growing in Stature and Wisdom," "Companionable Habits," "Learning to Share," "Talking with God," "Jesus, the Children's Friend," "Friends around the World" and "Missionary Heroes." More than one-third of the stories were written expressly for this volume. An introductory chapter offers suggestions on story-telling, and indexes of texts, special days, and subjects are included. (Harper & Brothers, 266 pp., $3.95)

J. B. Phillips' *The Book of Revelation,* completes his excellent New Testament translations. Written in memorable language, these volumes give new preaching stimulus to familiar passages and interpret the Covenant in a pertinent, often brilliant, modern-day vernacular. The Apocalypse is one of the most satisfying of Dr. Phillips' accomplishments. (Macmillan, 50 pp., $2.)

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Worth Quoting

Edited by E. PAUL HOVEY

We Protestants are an undisciplined people . . . The spiritual vitality of the church depends, not upon complicated organization or creative administration, important as these are; not upon eloquent preaching or adequate theology, valuable as they are; not upon unlimited financial resources or cultural maturity, helpful though they be.

What the Church primarily needs now, as always, is the presence within it of God-conscious, God-centered souls.

Albert E. Day

* * *

What is the elevation of your life? Suppose you could take a reading of it. What about your thoughts? Are they little, twisted thoughts, corrupted by prejudice, or are they great thoughts, objective, clear, genuine? . . . Are they consumed with the trivialities of life, or do they reach up and lay hold on the great things of life?

What is the elevation of your home life? . . . What is the elevation of the family that you dwell in? Would it depress a stranger, or inspire him?

What is the elevation of your secret impulses, the things you would like to do if you dared? . . . When you are with people, is it your secret impulse to get the best of them, or to draw the best out of them? Is your secret impulse to take advantage of every situation, or to make yourself useful in every situation?

What is the elevation of your prayers? Are they childish prayers, trying to get from God the things that you want, little nagging, needling requests of the Most High?

Theodore Parker Ferris, *When I Became A Man* (Oxford)

* * *

It is an accepted thing in our modern society to pause sometime during each day for a "coffee break" or a "coke break." The

(Continued on Page 24)

Pulpit Preaching

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Persistence in Prayer

Prayer and the Dignity of Man

LOWELL M. ATKINSON, First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey

You may be surprised at the title of the sermon, for it may seem that if man is a creature of dignity, if he can find in the very inherent nature of his being, a certain sufficiency and strength, then prayer becomes unnecessary. It may suggest itself to your mind that if we have intelligence to think, if we have wills to act and to guide, if we have conscience to divide between right and wrong, if we have hearts for benevolence, the very fact that we are equipped with this tremendous dignity of nature, might make it unnecessary to pray.

The Bible definitely leads us to think of a human being as a person of dignity and importance. The message that comes to us out of the Bible is this—that of all the creatures in this universe man is in a unique sense linked to that which is above him, namely, to the living God. Now it is precisely this that gives man his dignity at all, the fact that the touch of God is upon him, that even when he sins shamefully he does something which arouses in other human beings a reaction of shock or surprise or disgust or rebuke or shame or judgment. When a person does what is wrong, he goes against the grain of his nature and he becomes something different and something less than what God had intended for him to be. Every day we act as if that were so.

Now if we have this high view of man, the question persists, why is prayer necessary? Jesus assumed that prayer was necessary. We find it in His own example, for He prayed a great deal. And He went to a great deal of trouble to pray. He got up before daybreak to pray. He went out into solitary places to pray. If He felt it necessary to pray, then we have His example as a guide. Also, He used this form of words which I am going to hold before you as a text, "*when* you pray" — "*when* you pray," not *if* you pray, but *when* you pray. Jesus assumed that a human being, made of qualities given only by God, should naturally and gratefully and honestly turn to the God who has made him, in prayer. *When* you pray" — that was the way Jesus spoke about prayer to those to whom He would teach His innermost thoughts. He assumed that prayer was as natural to the spiritual life as breathing is to the biological existence of man. If you are going to live in the atmosphere of God's world, prayer becomes your spiritual breath — "*when* you pray."

And so I am assuming, rather than debating, that man is made for prayer. Sometimes we put it this way, that we are meant to pray as if everything depended upon God, and to act as if everything depended upon us. This is a sharp epigram that dramatizes a great spiritual attitude. Fling all of your cares upon God as if everything depended upon Him, and then in the strength of that prayer, fling yourself upon the problems of this life as if everything depended upon what you were thinking and doing.

I

There are four questions I want to lift for our consideration as we think of our belief in the dignity of man, a belief that comes to us out of the Bible.

The first question is — who are we? Dr. Lynn Harold Hough published a little book a few years ago called the dignity of man. In one of the opening chapters, Dr. Hough says, "The sense that God and man belong in one great bundle of life because God has given to man a certain likeness to Himself is one of the most transforming thoughts which can come to man." What a heartening thought — that we are creatures made for God, that our spirits are restless until they find their rest in Him, that in some strange way, by God's grace, we carry the hallmark of God in our being! This is one of the most inspiring and strengthening thoughts that a person can have, that human life is given its definitive meaning by that which is above us, and not by that which is below us. When you believe this, you begin to sense the true dignity of human life!

Now you can recognize what a difficult thing this is to do. Especially in our day, we find man described as if he were another

particle of cosmic dust. There is a whole range of thought where men use their minds to prove that they do not have any minds, — that they are just things! But if you have this conception of man, — that he is some kind of thing who by a strange process of circumstance is able to be conscious enough to know he is only a thing, — you have a very large estimate of man, and we may add, an unnecessarily low estimate of man.

And then there are those who speak of man as if he were linked to the biological world. Now he becomes some kind of animal with all kinds of impulses, instinctive drives, compulsive desires, and just enough intelligence to be able to write books proving he is an animal and that everybody lives like a beast. Again, that is a very low estimate of man, and an unnecessarily low estimate of man. The very fact that we are able to use our minds to question who we are, is in itself a clue to the fact that we have higher kinships than with things and with animals. This in itself should point us the right way.

"What are men better than sheep or goats," queried Tennyson.

That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

Now there is a picture to carry in your mind — a world of men linked by the golden chains of prayer to the Living God, linked to that which is above us! This is who we are — persons made for God. This is what we discover, as we turn to God in prayer.

And it is a very practical thing to be looking to God in prayer. You remember the transforming experience of Zacchaeus, when he looked into the eyes of Jesus Christ. Lloyd Douglas, in writing of it, used these words: Jesus said, "What did you see, Zacchaeus, that made you desire this peace?" And Zacchaeus replies, "I saw mirrored in your eyes, the Zacchaeus I was meant to be." This is what prayer does for us. We look to God and we see mirrored in the eyes of God the person we are meant to be. But you will never find out who you are, looking at animals, or looking at things! You will only find out who you are, if you look to God in prayer. In His countenance you will find mirrored the person you are meant to be.

II

The second question I want to raise is — why are we here? This is a philosophical question, as you recognize. The question *"why"* has to do with life's meaning — Why are we here? In this quest of the mind, in this quest for the reason of our being, what is the answer that prayer can give?

Now there is some time in your life, I can say very safely, when you are a philosopher. I do not think there is anybody with soul so dead but that some time or other he is a philosopher. He raises the question, why are we here? Some time or other he wants to know. What is the meaning of this, our life? Why is it that in all the far ranges of this sidereal universe, with its astronomical distances, with its countless multitude of galaxies of stars and planets, there is nothing really of any significance anywhere else, so far as anybody can find out, except here? And in this complex and fascinating earth, this tiny planet, inhabited by people, everything is really rather dull and uninteresting unless you are dealing with people. Why is it? Why is it that the meaning of life somehow seems to come back to people? Why is it that "outer space" fiction or movies that have to do with the far places of the universe become duller as you get farther from the earth and the world of people? The farther you get away from human beings the more inane it all becomes. Why is it? Why is it that the meaning and the interest and the fascination of life somehow have to do with people, with human beings? Why are we here? There is a purpose in it, you see, a purpose that we sense, even when we do not clearly define it. Somehow, as Browning says:

This world's no blot for us
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meant and drink.

In the seventh century, when Christianity came from Southern Europe into the British Isles, the King Edwin was very much interested in what the missionaries had to say. He was rather inclined to give them a hearing, and so for a period of time the Christian missionaries had their chance to present the cause of Christ in this new land. The turning point was an occasion when a very wise councilman said to the king that he thought the Christian missionaries should be permitted to state what it was that they had to offer in explaining the mystery of

ife — why we are here. The story is told y the venerable Bede, the Christian his- orian, and I want to give it to you as he giv- s it to us. The councilor speaks: "The pre ent life of man upon earth, O king, seems o me, in comparison with that time which s unknown to us, like the swift flight of a parrow through the house wherein you sit t supper in winter, with your ealdormen nd thegns, while the fire blazes in the nidst, and the hall is warmed, but the win- ry storms of rain or snow are raging broad. The sparrow, flying in at one door nd immediately out at another, while he s within, is safe from the wintry tempest; ut after a short space of fair weather, he mmediately vanishes out of your sight, assing from winter to winter again. So his life of man appears for a little while, ut of what is to follow or what went before ve know nothing at all. If, therefore, this ew doctrine tells us something more cer- ain, it seems justly to deserve to be follow- d." And so it was that England became Christian, because the Christian mission- aries brought a sense of meaning to a people who wanted to know why we are here! They old them that we come from God, that we an return to God, that we are to live for God. And suddenly all of the somber life of his northern kingdom is flooded with light s of a great purpose and a great meaning.

And today, if this new religion can tell *us* omething about why we are here, then just- y it deserves to be followed. It is true that God has a purpose and plan for everyone. And if we assume prayer as a normal part f our life, then God has His chance to re- eal to us what He intends for our true ood. Why are *we* here? Prayer gives God a hance to answer this searching question. ife then becomes a thing of great mean- ng. We make use of time; we do not just ill it. And life becomes a thing of glowing plendor and not something just to be endur- d.

III

Now the third question is, "How are we o live?" This you recognize as a moral ques- ion. It concerns guidance as to how we are o conduct ourselves. How are we to live in his world, and especially, in what manner f spirit? How can the quest become con- uest in the great battles and decisions and ontroversies of life? How can we make our ay as persons able to control that which xists to be controlled, able to attain goals hat should be attained, able to move with astery among all the assorted materials of life. How are we to live? How are we to find the secret of mastery in life?

I think the thing our religion tells us here is that we have got to sort out our values. If you are confused about what things are worth-while and what things are not, the chances are that you will make a chaos of your life. If ever there was a place where we need guidance from God, it is here. This should be our prayer by night and by day: "O God, show me the things in my life that are worthwhile, and teach me so to use my time, as to distinguish between the things that are worthwhile and the things that are not."

I am going to use a rather curious illustration now. It is an illustration from Lucian. It occurs in Lucian's "Dialogues of the Dead." He represents these people as having died and now living in the underworld of the shades. The Shade of Mausolus, a great wealthy king, is talking to Diogenes, the poverty-stricken cynic. Mausolus says, "You have heard of my fame upon earth, I know, for men have erected for me the greatest tomb in all the world, the mausolus. What about you, Diogenes?" "Well," said Diogenes, "I really don't know whether I have a great tomb; I don't even know if men have erected to me any tomb at all." "But," he says, "if you want to know what I really think, it is this, I do not care whether men have erected a great monument to me. All I really care about is that the name of Diogenes should be on the tongues of the wise as one who lived the life of a man! You, if you wish, may be remembered for having the greatest tomb on the earth."

Now this ability to sort out values, to see that some things are worthwhile and will last, while other things are transient and really insignificant is one of the great needs of the human spirit if we are to know how to live. And here, prayer is our guide. It keeps us in touch with the God of eternal values. It helps us judge things in the light of the God in whose character truth and beauty and goodness live forever. To open the windows of your life so that the light of eternity falls upon all the things of time, — this is to find out what things are really worthwhile in this life, to sort out the values and find out how we are to live!

IV

The final thing I want to say is, Where are we going? Does life have direction and destination, a goal? Do we have such a sense of destination that life takes on dynamic because we know we are going somewhere?

There is a great difference between the kind of purposeful activity that is moving toward a goal and the scrambling of little feet in the squirrel cage — much activity but no destination, nothing being done. Which is to be for us?

If we can look to the God who has marshalled us, who has set for us a goal, who has lifted over us a standard, who has flung before us a vision of the good life and an eternity where the good life never dies, — if we can have this vision in our souls, this sense of destination — we will know that this is a good world. "Quo Vadis," are words that can be addressed to all of us. "Whither goest thou?" Where are you going? Do you know? Do you have any sense of destination? Have you put your mind on it? Have you asked God in prayer — where am I going? This is a big question, and a question that we should ask of God when we pray.

Recently I have been reading about South Africa, and I have just finished a fascinating volume by General Smuts, one of the great Christian statesmen and thinkers of our century, called toward a better world, I want to give you a few of his sentences because they have such a sense of direction and such a sense of destination: "My fundamental impression of life I can give you in words which most of you know from your childhood. They occur on the first page of the greatest book in the world. They come from the youth of the world, and today in its maturity they are truer than ever. The world is good. This is a good world. We need not approve of all the items in it, nor of all the individuals in it; but the world itself, which is more than its parts or individuals, which has a soul, a spirit, a pull, a fundamental relation to each of us, deeper than all other relations, is a friendly world. It has borne us; it has carried us onward; it has humanized us and guided our faltering footsteps thorughout the long and slow advance; it has endowed us with strength and courage; it has proved a real vale of soul-making for us humans and created for us visions, dreams, ideals which are still further moulding us on eternal lines. It is full of tangles, of ups and downs. There is always enough to bite on, to sharpen wits on, to test our courage and manhood. It is indeed a world built for heroism, but also for beauty, tenderness, mercy."

A world where we can shape life on eternal lines is a good world in which to live. Prayer gives God a chance to make clear to us the goal of this life; and our experience in this world becomes, as St. Paul describes it, an earnest, a foretaste, of the life of heaven.

A lovely story in *The Upper Room* tells of the unillumined house. A representative of a great power company was visiting in a house in Brazil. As night fell, he noticed that the house was not illumined, except by a little kerosene lamp. This was particularly strange because, looking out the window, he could see the great electric power lines nearby. He raised the question, how is it that with all this electric power nearby you don't have it in the house, but just a kerosene lamp? The answer was, "We have no transformer to make all this power available in our house." Now prayer is that transformer. The tragedy of people who live unillumined lives in unillumined houses is simply that while all this tremendous power is here, they are letting it pass them by, just because they do not make use of this transformer called prayer.

Prayer can bring the power of God right into the house and bring it right into our minds and bring it right into our souls. God has given to us the way, the means, the power of illumination, teaching us. when we pray, who we are and why we are here, how we are to live and where we are going. What a pity if we should let this great wonderful life, this wonderful power, pass us by.

Praying and Working

ARMIN C. OLDSEN, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Ohio

O Lord . . . give ear unto my prayer . . . that goeth not out of feigned lips.
Psalm 17:1

Roy Minich tells of a strange discovery he made as he was walking along a country lane near his summer camp. In a weedy fence corner he noticed a large stone that had been hollowed out as a watering trough. Upon more closely examining the stone he found a noble inscription, "My strength cometh from the hills." But instead of offering water to the birds and wild creatures the hollow of the stone was filled with old rotten leaves. Further investigation revealed that there actually was a well on the hill above. And there had been a pipe leading from the well to the stone, but it had long

een broken and rusted. There was still eed for water in the fence corner and there as still an ample supply of water up on ne hill, but the contact between the need nd the supply had been broken.

Isn't that a pretty good picture of prayer n the life of modern man — or rather, of ne lack of prayer in the life of modern nan? The need of God's help in our life hould be evident to everyone. And God is eady at all times and in every kind of difficulty to help and sustain us. But the contact we can have with God — by prayer — s largely broken and rusted as a result of eglect. I'm sure that's true of many of us. Ve are inclined to ignore one of the greatst sources of serenity, courage, and faith— nd if there is anything we need most urgntly today it is serenity, courage, and faith!

Our fathers were for the most part more ware of their dependence on God than we re. When someone suddenly became seriousy ill, the first thing they did was to pray. Ve think first of all of the best doctors we an get and whether there is not a miracle rug that will quickly cure. When there was threat of war, the first thing they did was o pray. We hope that our military experts ave an overwhelming supply of new and ffective secret weapons. When there was a nreat of war, the first thing they did was to ray. We hope that our military experts ave an overwhelming supply of new and ffective secret weapons. When there was drought, the first thing they did was to ray. We wonder how long it will be before nan will be able to control the weather. 'he advancements in science made it more ifficult to pray: God did not seem so necssary anymore. We had learned to help ourelves. We largely forgot about God and nade a kind of idol out of science. At least 'e trusted science when we should have been rusting God. Now we have discovered that ithout God science does not solve our undamental problems; it only helps to make nem the more complex. In the final analysis 'e are just as dependent on God as our fathrs were. It is still God who has to bless and eal.

There is as much need for prayer in our fe as there was in the life of our fathers. erhaps more! Man has always needed pray-r. On page four of my Bible it says, "Then egan men to call upon the name of the ord." The Bible closes with a prayer, "Even o, come. Lord Jesus." Who of us, in his etter moments, has not been ready to join the disciples in their prayer, "Lord, teach us to pray."

I

In the Bible we listen to the prayers of those who knew how to pray. Some of the best prayers ever spoken are forever preserved in the Book of Psalms. We turn to the 17th Psalm and listen as David begins his prayer, "O Lord, . . . give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips." David sang many a song of praise, thanking God for His amazing goodness, but when David wrote the 17th Psalm he was in real trouble and he was pleading for help. What his particular difficulty was, we do not know. David was no stranger to danger. He fought the bear and the lion that tried to prey on his father's sheep; he went to fight Goliath single-handed; he had to hide from Saul who was seeking his life; he had to flee before the revolutionary forces led by his own son. There was many a time in his life when David might have cried out of the danger that threatened him, "O Lord, hear my prayer."

Most of us know how David felt because we've been in a tight spot ourselves — when someone we love was seriously ill, when we faced a serious operation, when our house was on fire, when our children were in trouble, when the old excuse that we did not have time to pray was forgotten and we called out, "O Lord, hear my prayer." Now the aches and pains of the world have moved so close to all of us and have encircled our lives with such frightening intimacy that we feel an urgency to pray often and fervently, "O Lord, hear my prayer."

David had long been on intimate terms with God. When he began his prayer. he was not hampered by any feeling of awkwardness or embarrassment. Prayer was not a novel experience for him. In the sixth verse of the 17th Psalm he says, "I have called upon Thee." David prayed regularly.

God will hear the very first true prayer of a fervant soul that turns to Him for help, as well as the last one, but a prayer life is not developed in a moment of desperation. Prayer is an art in which we grow and develop. Christ introduced a parable on persistent prayer with the words, "Men ought always to pray." We do not make friends with our neighbor by nodding to him across the driveway twice a year. And we do not develop the art of praying by an occasional pious request of God. I read somewhere that the members of a West African Christian mission were taught to spend time every day

speaking with God in private. In time each convert for Christ had a path worn from his hut to his private prayer spot in the brush. When a prayer path became overgrown because it was not used regularly, the members became concerned and admonished him who was forgetting about his prayers with the words, "Brother, there is something the matter with your prayer path." How is your prayer path? Do you pray regularly?

II

David prayed, "O Lord . . . give ear unto my prayer" and then simply gave expression to what he felt. He was not trying to impress God nor his fellowmen with his ability to pray. One of you recently wrote, "Why do the ministers of so many churches say prayers that many of us cannot understand?" I'm certain they don't mean to. But sometimes a formal, time-honored prayer out of a book is cold and does not strike a response in the heart that is anxious to speak to God. God reads the heart, not the lips, and not a book. God hears the thoughts, not the words. To God a sigh or a sob may be a more acceptable prayer than a beautiful petition written by a master of language.

"O Lord . . . give ear unto my prayer" David prayed confidently. When he rose from his knees he was not wringing his hands, worried that God might not have heard. The experience of his prayer life had increased his trust in God's promise to hear prayer. He could write, "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." David had learned a great, fundamental lesson on prayer. He had trust not only in God's power and willingness to help him; he depended on God's wisdom to determine how the prayer was to be answered.

It is at this point that many lose their trust in God and their belief in prayer. They sadly misunderstand the purpose of prayer and the power of him who prays, and are disappointed or seriously disillusioned because they do not receive the literal fulfillment of their petition. In one of his excellent sermons on prayer, Spurgeon, famous English Baptist preacher of the last century, said, "I should shrink from ever praying again if I were absolutely sure that the Lord would answer my prayer whatever it might be." Most of us can remember prayers from our lips that were not answered as we had hoped they would be and today we are grateful they were not answered that way. Now we realize that God knows best. If all prayers were answered literally, the world would be in a far worse state of confusion than it actually is. When God encourages us to pray, He does not promise to place omnipotence into our hands so that we can get and do what we want. Some of our worst troubles in life come when we get what we want and think we need. Imagine what our world would be like if God would place all His power at the command of humans, without any restraint whatever. It's bad enough that some people in our world have the power of the atom bomb. Imagine what would happen if some of them had all-power, or for that matter, if you or I had it. We are not wise enough and not noble enough to control such power. We sometimes get angry and we are inclined to be selfish. We pray but God, all-wise and all-loving, determines just what the answer shall be.

You may have heard of the cynical and unhappy woman who had lost all faith in God and also all trust in prayer. But something was bothering her. Might there be power in prayer after all? She was not one for doing things halfway. She tackled the mountain that was visible from her kitchen window and spent a few moments in prayer before retiring that night, asking that it might be moved by morning. In the morning she gazed out of the window and saw that the mountain was still there. Her disgusted response was. "Just as I thought." There had been no confidence in her prayer in the first place and no willingness to accept the answer of God's wisdom. Hers was not a prayer; it was a presumptuous challenge. I don't know whether it is ever necessary that we should really move mountains with our prayers. Instead of moving the mountain, God may give us the strength and the ability to climb over it; or He may show us an easier way through the foothills; or He may give us the stamina to skirt the entire mountain range; or He may make us content to stay at the foot of the mountain and learn to admire it. One of the most meaningful prayers of Christ was that which He uttered in the Garden of Gethsemane asking for deliverance from the suffering that lay ahead. Yet how clearly He stated that He wanted nothing that would not be in harmony with the will of His Father. Whether mountains bother us or molehills we are wise if we add to our prayers this little word of resignation, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

We know that God loves us. We know that Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross for our sins that we might have complete forgiveness by faith and heaven as a gift

God for all eternity. Here we know what e will of God is, also for ourselves. and e can pray for spiritual gifts, forgiveness sins, stronger faith, greater Christian urage, in the confidence that God will ve as we ask.

III

David prayed sincerely, "O Lord, . . . give r to my prayer, that goeth not out of igned lips." Another translation is clearer. O Lord, hear my prayer. that does not me from lips of deceit." The lips of David ithfully revealed the feeling of his heart. e was convinced that he needed God's help he would not have asked for it. David as not a man to ask God to do for him hat he could do for himself. In the 17th salm he was concerned chiefly about his emies. He was not bringing them up just have something to pray about. He recogized their power in relation to his own eakness and knew he needed God's help.

Well might we begin every prayer with e thought, "Lord, hear my prayer, that es not come from lips of deceit." While will always be true that "the fervent rayer of a righteous man availeth much" nd that "prayer moves the hand that moves e universe," it will always be equally true at prayer is not so much a means of getng God to do what we want, as it is a eans of putting ourselves in such a relaonship with God that He can do in and for nd through us what He wants. In this conection, Augustine used the picture of a man ing his boat to a rock. When a man throws rope to a rock it is not to pull the rock to e boat, but to pull the boat to the rock. hen a man sends a prayer to heaven it is ot to change the will of God to conform to s own but to have God help him change s own will to conform to that of God. rayer is not a magic means by which God n control us, releasing His power and rpose in us. Prayer is not a substitute for ork, but a source of strength for work. ften it is a promise to work hard for God. is surprising how often prayer is an effort to escape responsibility, an attempt to avoid work, an excuse for not tackling a difficult problem. It is much easier to pray about resisting temptation, about converting the heathen, about living a godly life, about restoring peace to the world, while one is lying in a soft bed or sitting in a more or less comfortable church pew, than it is to go out and do something about it. No wonder some have the impression that prayer is asking God to run errands for us. Prayer has been called a "mail-order" means of getting what one wants and not having to pay for it, not even taxes. An extreme example of such an attitude is given by Principal Jacks in his book *The Legends of Smokeover.* A doctor has this to say about one of his patients: "Thirty years ago he said a prayer and made up his mind never to say another. It all turned on that. The prayer was — this is how he put it to me — 'O Lord, I expect you to look after my interests for the rest of my life, and, believing that you won't forget, I'm never going to worry again.' Well, he lost his three sons in the war, and went clean off his chump."

It is said that on one occasion when Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist. was making a trip across the Atlantic, a fire broke out in the hold of the ship. Crew and passengers lined up to pass buckets. A friend said to Moody, "Let us go to the other ship and engage in prayer." The evangelist replied, "No! We will stand right here and pass buckets and pray hard all the time." That's praying and working! What we are willing to do for the causes we pray about is usually a revelation of our sincerity. David did not expect God miraculously to destroy Goliath, or to keep King Saul at a safe distance, or to overcome the revolutionary forces of Absalom. He prayed for God's help. He worked hard. God helped him.

Prayer is as valid today as it ever was. Our need of God's help is great. God is as willing to help us as He ever was. If we pray regularly, confidently, sincerely, and really work in the causes for which we pray, God will hear our prayer.

low To Tune In On God

OHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

A little more than a decade ago there was o method of communication with the vast aches of the Canadian Northland save by dio. Scattered across that immense terriry were little colonies of engineers, trapers, prospectors, and miners. Once a week midnight personal messages were sent out to these men by radio.

I talked with one of these adventurous souls and he told me that for a considerable time he was stationed alone far north of Churchill, Manitoba, almost within the Arctic Circle. One night, he said. he was listening idly to the radio to calls coming from

ships at sea, snatches of song and dance music, and occasional speeches, but his attention was not on these programs. He was thinking of other things.

Suddenly his wandering thoughts were arrested and mobilized. He was all attention, listening eagerly, for he had just heard his own name. The announcer at Winnipeg was reading a very important message from a friend.

This is a parable of prayer, true prayer. Prayer in its essence is communication with a person, a Divine person, in which spiritual messages are exchanged. It is a two-way system. We must listen as well as speak.

Long ago one of God's servants said: "Speak' Lord, for thy servant heareth." In this hurried, fevered generation, we reverse that and say: "Listen, Lord, for thy servant speaketh."

It is not surprising to find that airmen have noted the parallel between radio and prayer. Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, whose adventurous life is known to most Americans, tells of an eventful Sunday afternoon flight in the month of December to Chicago. Ice began to accumulate on the wings and the fog closed in. Then ice formed on the aerial. He lost the radio beam. The radio itself went dead. For seven hours he flew blind, not knowing where he was. Nobody else knew where he was. Nobody even knew that he was lost. The precious supply of gasoline was swiftly running out.

As darkness was coming on, he caught a glimpse of a four-lane highway with auto headlights flashing on it. He knew that that highway must lead somewhere, so he followed it. Seeing a red glow to the right, he turned in that direction, and coming down to a hundred feet of the ground he recognized the city of Toledo and found the airport. When he checked on his gasoline supply he found that eleven minutes had separated him from certain death. Rickenbacker said:

"We had flown blind; without a beam, but we were on a beam just the same. I like to think that it was the big radio that kept us going . . . the thing that keeps all of us flying safely through the fog and night toward some mysterious and important goal. The Big Radio is a two-way job. You've got to keep tuned with it, and you've got to talk back. I believe in prayer," he concluded.

One of the helpful effects of thinking of prayer in terms of such a symbol is that it leads us to believe that something is going to happen when we pray. It may seem an extraordinary thing to say, but it is true that multitudes never expect anything to happen when they pray. Generally nothing does happen. Prayer becomes a meaningless rite, an empty ceremony, something that they feel they ought to do, and so they keep on saying their prayers. They use the same phraseology they have used for ten or twenty or thirty years, but the words are stripped of all vitality and meaning. Such prayers are generally offered at the end of an exhausting and debilitating day when they are mentally and physically wearied. So prayer becomes lifeless, stale, and unprofitable. A feeling of relief is experienced when the prayer is finished, and they say: "Now I can go to bed."

Such persons are just like the northern farmer of whom Tennyson writes. He describes what church-going meant to him.

And I always came to his church before
my Sally were dead,
And heard him a-humming away, like a
buzzard clock over my head,
I never knew what he meant, but I
thought he had something to say,
And I thought he said what he ought to
have said, and I came away.

Just as fruitless and unproductive are the prayers of many people. Now this may sound rash. It may sound destructive of religion. The fact of the matter is that it would not make a solitary particle of difference in the lives of tens of thousands if they stopped praying, because their prayers do not influence their lives anyway and they don't expect them to. One might as well face reality, for what I have said is the truth.

It is a travesty to use the word "prayer" to describe that kind of barren experience. True prayer is vital and meaningful. It means co-operating with the eternal God for release of His divine energies. It means tapping the resources of the Infinite. Incalculable forces are made available in real prayer.

It is an exhilarating experience to discover from time to time new ways of praying, new times and places of prayer. One can pray walking down crowded Fifth Avenue at the busiest hour of the day. One can pray on the subway, on the busses, anywhere in this great city or out on lonely reaches of the prairie as he follows the plow. Suddenly one will sense the presence of God beside one and find strength and quietness and relaxation and be fitted to meet life's emergencies. That kind of prayer is real, meaningful, a two-way spiritual relationship.

Sometimes I think that listening is the most important part of prayer, just quiet waiting on God that He may speak to ou

uls.

No one in human history employed prayer s frequently or as meaningfully as did Je- us. How constant was His life of prayer! t any moment He would turn aside and alk with the Heavenly Father. So we are ise if we listen when He begins to teach s anything regarding prayer. He said: Two men went up into the temple to pray." hey "went up" because the temple was lo- ated on an elevation in Jerusalem.

The two men of whom Jesus spoke were oles apart socially, morally, and religiously. ne was a Pharisee, living a strict and lameless life of religious observance. The ther was a publican, an associate of sin- ers, classified with the heathen, one of the ff-scourings of the world.

Both these men called on the name of God. he first man's prayer was completely with- ut result, utterly fruitless. He did not even ind God's wave-length.

The second man, despite his unpromising utlook, received a great blessing in response his prayer.

Now, if we can discover why the prayer f one man was a dismal failure and the ther a glowing success, we may learn some- hing about the technique of prayer.

I

In the first place, the Pharisee's prayer ever rose above the orbit of his own con- tricted life. "The Pharisee stood and prayed hus with himself." Goodspeed translates it ore pointedly. "The Pharisee stood up and ttered this prayer to himself." His prayer idn't reach God because it was addressed to imself. He did, of course, use God's name. id it ever occur to you that this may be ue to an appalling degree of our own rayers? Oftentimes we are not talking to od at all, but talking to ourselves, so that ur prayers may be just an attempt to in- ate our own ego?

True, the Pharisee began by addressing od. He said: "God, I thank thee." That was nice beginning, but he added: "I thank hee that I am not as other men are. God, I hank you that I am not like the rest of the eople around me." The only reason the harisee called on God's name was to sum- on God as a witness to his own meritori- us conduct and as a listener to his boast- g.

The place of prayer was in the forecourt f the temple, and the Pharisee had taken a rominent position there. He continued: God, I thank thee that I am not like the est of the people. I thank thee that I am not greedy or dishonest or immoral or even as yonder publican." You see, not only does this man absolve himself from all sins, but on top of that he separates himself from his fellow-men. "I fast twice a week," he said. The Levitical Law called for a period of fasting at least once a year on the day of atonement. This man said: "I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get." The Levitical Law said that they should give tithes of the increase of the fields and the herds. But this man tithes everything, one-tenth of everything he gives to God.

What a wonderfully good man he was! God must have been tremendously impressed. But you see, he wasn't praying at all. This was a soliloquy, and a soliloquy is defined as "the act of talking to oneself." So he talked to himself for a while, and his prayer never rose above the orbit of his circumscribed little life. He never once got outside of himself.

Do your prayers get through? Have they a quality that directs them to God or are they a soliloquy addressed to yourself?

II

Well, the second thing about this man's prayer is that the Pharisee thought that he could accumulate merit with God.

The moment we begin to think of our own merits before God, we separate ourselves from Him and close the door to prayer.

Do you recall the elder brother in Jesus' parable? He said to his father: "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." What a wonderfully good boy he was! Never once was the shadow of disobedience cast upon his life. Everything he did was right. So when his prodigal brother returned from his wanderings he refused to go into the house and welcome him. He was too good, too holy to be defiled by contact with a brother who had sinned. You see that Jesus deliberately caricatures this type of man.

Alfred Lord Tennyson shows true insight when he writes:

For merit lives from man to man
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

This is in full accord with the teaching of Jesus who has told us that when we have done everything we can do, we should say: "We are unprofitable servants we have done that which was our duty to do."

And God's Prophet, Isaiah, reminds us that "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

St. Paul, even in the face of his wonderful life of love and loyalty to his Lord, said:

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all men to be received that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners of whom I am the chief." That is real praying. It is the spirit of John Bradford in his oft-quoted words spoken when he saw a felon going to judgment: "There but for the grace of God go I."

My friends, we must never parade our virtues before God or think that we have stored up merit. The only merit we have to offer him is the merit of His Son, our Saviour. As the well-loved hymn "Rock of Ages" has it:

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

That is genuine prayer.

III

Finally, in the greatest blunder of all, the Pharisee did what we all like to do: he increased his own complacency by comparing his life to that of a wayward, struggling, sinning fellow-creature: "God, I thank thee that I am not like the rest of men, . . . nor even as this publican."

This is a frailty that is not confined to Jesus' day. We all partake of it. It is sometime manifested in malicious gossip. When we talk about the defects of others we feel a warm and pleasant glow of self-righteousness within us. What a tragedy that human beings should resort to tearing down the reputations of others in order to inflate their own ego.

Thomas a Kempis in *The Imitation of Christ* caught the spirit of the Master when he wrote: "Account not thyself better than others lest peradventure thou be held worse in the sight of God that knowest what is in man," and then he adds: "All we be frail, but thou shalt hold no man frailer than thyself."

Prayer, then, is the establishment of a personal and soul-searching relationship with God. A window to the Infinite is opened when we approach Him not in the spirit of prideful boasting, but in true humility, "for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Does God Hear Us When We Pray?

THEODORE P. FERRIS, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

Every once in a while you meet a person who has prayed all his life, he was brought up to pray, he has prayed regularly and naturally, and then he gradually stops praying. If he tried to explain to you why he stopped (under most circumstances, of course, he wouldn't try to explain nor would you ask him) but if he did try to explain why he had stopped praying when he had been in the habit of doing it all his life, he might say something like this, "I felt as though I were talking into space; it was as though I were on the telephone and no one was on the other end of the line. I felt something like a child who had written letters to Santa Claus all his early days and then stopped and, when someone asked him why he stopped, he said, Well, why brother? They just go up in smoke!" What this person is trying to say is that he stopped praying because he thought God did not hear him when he prayed.

Our question is, Does God really hear us when we pray? The answer, let it be said at once, is Yes, he does. "When I was in trouble, I called unto the Lord and he heard me." But it is not so simple as that, and it is not enough simply to say that and nothing more. It may be well worth our time to think about this great matter, knowing in the beginning that we are not coming to any final answers, that these questions are too vast for us to pretend to plumb the depths of them in a few minutes. People have spent a lifetime pondering them and have not reached the bottom of questions like these. But we can skirt about them, make little inroads into them, and perhaps some light will be shed for some one person here and there on what to them has been a baffling mystery.

I

One of the reasons why you wonder from time to time whether or not God hears you when you pray is that it is almost impossible for you to visualize it. Isn't that true? You can't picture it. You may have a picture of God as a great man, a magnified man. I don't mean a man with a gray beard; you have outgrown that long ago. But, nevertheless, you picture God in human terms, the great Cosmic Executive with the management of the universe in his hands. And then you go on to picture him getting calls from all over the inhabited world. One person wants a child made well, another man in prison wants to be set free, somebody else asks for $25.00 to be sent right away to pay the rent so that he will not be evicted. Someone asks for rain so that the crops

on't perish, and someone else from anoth- part of the earth pleads that the rains ay stop so the people won't be flooded out. heartbroken man appeals to him to heal e unhappiness of his home. A troubled arent sends in a call to break up an affair etween his son and a Roman Catholic girl. nd from this side of the world come pray- rs that the Russians may be destroyed, and rom the other side come prayers that the Vestern powers be set at naught.

When you stop to think of the number f people and the vast variety of requests hat they make upon the God of the universe, nd the calls that cancel out each other, the hole thing seems fantastic. This is some- ing that you cannot picture; no matter ow hard you try to stretch your mind to ke it in, you cannot do it. And you come the general conclusion that the whole ing is too much for any one person to andle even if that person be the super-per- n God. You can't picture it so you put it t of your mind.

You may have a less personal picture of od. Your image of God, as you think of im either consciously or unconsciously, is e God of the suns and the planets, the reat cosmic God who keeps the universe oing and, if you have that sort of picture f God, you can hardly imagine his being terested in the likes of you and your rather nimportant needs and desires. They seem f great urgency to you, but when you stop think of it you cannot presume that they ould be of any great concern to the God f the whole earth and the solar system. The od of the Milky Way cannot be greatly con- rned as to whether or not your child gets ome safely from a dance.

You know that the sun shines graciously nd gloriously on everybody and you can raise the sun; you can expose yourself to e light and warmth of it, but it never oc- rs to you to think that the sun singles you t for special attention. And so, in this icture of God, it isn't that it is too much for od; it is beneath him. He is too great to ther with all these little concerns that me up like mist rising from the surface f the earth. You can worship him, but you n't expect him to single you out for spe- al attention.

Whichever your picture of God may be, becomes increasingly difficult for you to sualize the fact that God hears you indi- dually, and so you may come to the con- usion that he doesn't hear you at all, and if e doesn't hear you, there isn't much use in praying.

Just two or three suggestions. First, because you are a human being you are bound to visualize; you will never get away entirely from pictures and the deeper the thing is that you are thinking about the more you will depend on pictures. For instance, when you think of the equator, what do you think of? A band around the middle of the earth. When you think of the North Pole, you think of something sticking up out of the top of the globe. Those are pictures. When you think of God, nine times out of ten you think of some picture of God, and my suggestion is that on the whole, the bigger picture of God you have the better it is. In other words, I think you are on safer ground with the picture of the big cosmic God than you are with the picture of the Senior Executive. Both pictures have drawbacks and dangers, but the larger picture is more likely to be the better one.

As you grow, your picture of God ought to grow and as you increase in imagination, understanding and depth of perception, you ought to reach out to greater depths in the nature of God until God becomes vaster, more wonderful and majestic than he was when you were a child. After all, it is so in the Bible. God appears in the opening chapters of Genesis in very human terms as a God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and in the last chapters of Revelation as the great cosmic energy of love who is making all things new. This growth in man's picture of God is right; it is natural.

This suggestion may help. Think of God not as someone at the other end of a long-distance telephone call, but as a Living Spirit within you. In other words, try to think of your prayer not as a long-distance call by which you are trying to reach someone way out there hundreds of miles away, but as an intensely local call, communing with Someone who is already with you. When a man prays, it is as though the particle of life which he is were becoming part of, and aware of the whole of life. If you think of it for a moment in these impersonal terms, imperfect though they be, it might be something like this. You are alive. There is no doubt about that; there is life in you. That life has conceived you, dreamed you when you did not exist, created you unlike any other creature ever made before or any other who ever shall be made hereafter; and when you pray, that life that is within you is reaching out and appealing to the life

that makes all men, the stars and the moons, and all other things. It isn't altogether impossible to believe that the life that took the trouble to become you is aware of your troubles and your needs.

This thought has helped me but, when I was thinking about it, I began to wonder whether this was good New Testament religion, and I rather had my doubts about it until I stopped to think more carefully about it. I remembered that St. Paul talked about the body being the temple of the Spirit of God, and then I came across a line in his Epistle to the Romans. It was a line that was made clear to me for the first time when I read J. B. Phillips' translation of the Epistle. This is the line, "We do not know how to pray worthily as sons of God, but his spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words." In other words, St. Paul is saying that the longings that you have in you, the reaching upward of desires that you may never know how to express, these longings are the Spirit of God in you praying for you. This may help you to overcome the feeling that God is far away.

And remember, finally, that there are things that you cannot visualize and yet you know they are true. I was told in New York that a jet plane had recently flown from the West Coast to the East Coast in three and a half hours and that this was possible because it stayed in the "jet stream," which is a current of air moving at such a tremendous rate of speed that the plane is pushed on in excess of its own speed. This whole thing—the plane, the stream, the speed — is beyond my visualization, but I am sure it is true. Nor can I visualize the splitting of the atom, but I know it is true. I cannot really visualize the love of parents for ten children, and I cannot really picture to myself how it can be that that when one of the children dies the parents suffer no less anguish because nine others survive. Yet I know this to be the mystery of love. And I believe this to be the mystery of God.

III

There is another more practical reason why you sometimes wonder whether God hears you and that is that you don't get an answer. If you write a letter to a person and you get no answer in return, and then you write again and you still don't get an answer, you normally draw the conclusion that either he didn't get the letter or he threw it away. He didn't pay any attention to it, at any rate. So it is with prayer, you think. No answer no one home.

But not *quite* so. The situations are not altogether comparable. In the first place, you don't expect a verbal answer to prayer as you expect it from a letter or a telephone call, or a conversation. The answers to prayer come in the course of events, the things that happen to you. If things don't happen the way you want them to, you assume that you get no answer. If you ask God to make you well when you are sick and you get well, you say your prayer was answered. But if you don't get well, but get worse, you say your prayer was not answered. There is another possibility, of course, and that is that the answer was No; that God heard you, but that his answer was No, or Not yet.

Why we always jump to the conclusion that if we do not get exactly what we prayed for God does not hear us is beyond me when I stop to think about it. Even though it is hard to take No for an answer from anybody, let alone from God, we know, and we know beyond the shadow of a doubt if we have lived very long, that we are not always going to get everything we ask for in prayer. Can we put that down now and remember it later on? We are not going to get everything we ask for in prayer, we know that ahead of time. An earnest and devout soul who knows the Gospels and has been taught by people who believe that prayer can accomplish anything, will say right away, What about the words of Jesus when he said, "Whatever you pray about and ask for believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." What about that?

That statement of Jesus comes in the eleventh chapter of Mark and in the immediately preceding chapter, when Jesus is going up to Jerusalem with his close friends, two of them, James and John, ask him to give them places of priority, sitting on either side of him in his kingdom. Do you remember what his answer is? "You don't know what you are asking. You may be able to drink of my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with, but to give you places on either side of me, this is not for me to give; they will be given to those for whom they have been prepared." Jesus was saying point-blank that there were some things he couldn't give them no matter how often they asked for them, or how much they wanted them. Nor could God. Jesus was saying in the first instance that when you pray, you pray with the simple trust and confidence of a child. He was saying in the

econd instance that you also pray with the umility of a child, knowing that everything ou want and ask for your Father will not ive you.

You know also that Jesus did not get verything he asked for. Jesus on the very ast night of his life asked to be spared from he agony of death. He went alone into the garden, he left his friends behind him beause at times like that even your closest riends must stay behind. He went into the garden alone and said, "Father, all things are possible unto thee; take this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." But it wasn't taken from him. He wasn't spared. He was given the strength o meet and face the ordeal and to go hrough it in such a way as to save the world. When we ask for things in absolute onfidence and trust as he taught us to ask, we ask also with the same kind of humility always adding to our prayer, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

And we shall always have before our eyes he vision of his cross on which he died, after he had asked to be spared and his prayer was not granted, and dying upon which he continued to pray for his enemies first, for the lost ones around about him in he same plight, for his friends, and finally for himself. It was the great sublime illustration of what Shorthouse had the boldness o put into a single line in *John Inglesant*, "Only the infinite Pity is sufficient for the nfinite pathos of human life."

Rather than trying to bring these threads together in a logical fashion. I am reminded of a poem written in his early years by William Butler Yeats. It is about an old Irish priest named Peter Gilligan. He was a faithful priest, visiting his people at all hours of the day and night. But he was getting older now and he was tired. He had had a long hard day when a call came from a man's wife that her husband was dying, would he please come right away. He complained to himself, he didn't want to go, but he knew that he must go and he knelt down by a chair to say a prayer to ask the Lord to bless him on his misison. Lo and behold, as he prayed he fell asleep and the hours of the evening went by and the dawn came and when he woke up he was terrified and cried out, "The man will have died." Nevertheless, he went as quickly as he could, and when he got to the house, the wife met him with a peaceful smile on her face and said, "O Father, thanks for coming again, he died peacefully and with a smile after you left." And Peter Gilligan realized that somehow, in the mystery of God, the man and his wife believed that he had been there and that God had made up for his shortcomings in some way that he could not understand, that God had heard his prayer. What he said as he left the house, many a man can say when, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, he knows that the great God heard him when he prayed.

He Who hath made the night of stars
For souls who tire and bleed,
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need.

He Who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in His care,
Had pity on the least of things,
Asleep upon a chair.

Does It Pay To Pray?

WILLIAM McLEISTER, Beverly Heights United Presbyterian Church of Mt. Lebanon, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

On first hearing, this interrogation seems o arise from the heart and mind of a pragmatist. A pragmatist is a member of that school of philosophy which believes that a hing is true if it works. While there are great weaknesses in that system of philosophy, yet the baseness of motive is not one which we should condemn when we look at t from the spiritual viewpoint. In this day of pragmatic thinking we expect something n return for effort expended. The Word of God tells us that God will back up His promses concerning prayer. Prayer does pay when that prayer is according to the conditions set forth by God's Word.

It is well for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ periodically to recheck his prayer life. There is not one of us who is doing all the praying that he should or that he could! Why is it that we allow things of lesser importance to crowd out and to crush this which is at the very heart of our Christian experience? Do we not need to gather again in that little band of disciples with their Master and do we not need to watch Him go off a few paces and kneel in prayer until His countenance is changed? Then do we not need to say with them, "Lord, teach us to pray like that"?

I

As we search the Word of God for guidance on this vital subject, let us see *The Power of prayer.* The Apostle said, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." As one reads the thrilling and majestic prayers of the Apostle Paul, he wishes he could pray like him. Whenever the apostle finds himself — and regardless of the situation, whether it be one of extreme difficulty, such as a shipwreck at sea, or whether it be one of great triumph as thousands rise up and receive Christ — from the Apostle's lips always goes up a prayer.

We have the same spiritual resources open to us as did the Apostle Paul. He was human —all human—and we can rise to his level if we will. When I read the biography of George Mueller and find his statement that during his life time he enumerated 25,000 prayers that were answered—and 5,000 being answered on the day he asked for them —I feel that I have far to go. Perhaps all of us, as we match our lives against these men of God who have been men of prayer, will realize that we are losing great potential resources, spiritually speaking, because we have not availed ourselves of this power.

How can we get it? Only through receiving it. The power of prayer depends not on man but on God. I believe that much of the difficulty concerning this subject—which, though common, is much misunderstood by Christians—is due to a basic misunderstanding in the minds of many believers. Dr. John S. Bonnell has said, "The trouble with many Christians is that they look upon prayer simply as something to which they turn when their own cleverness or capacity fails them and they need the stronger help of a God." He says that it is something like the old *deus ex machina* of the Greek tragedy — "The god is a machine." In those Greek tragedies when the plot got so complicated that the hero couldn't possibly extricate himself, they would wheel in a God from the wing in a machine and immediately the problem was solved. There is the concept of prayer in the hearts and minds of too many Christians that "the god in a machine" can be wheeled in from the wing when the going gets too tough for the individual's own ability and cleverness and capacity.

That kind of a foxhole faith, as it was called during the last war, is not the scriptural concept of prayer. Nor is prayer to be thought of as our trying to change God's mind; nor is prayer to be a substitute for doing something that you are capable of doing in your own power; nor is prayer trying to impress your will, which is human, on the divine will, which is omnipotent. What then is prayer in its true power? Prayer is simply grasping a closeness with God that makes life prayer and makes prayer life. It's a surrender of one's finite will to the will of the divine Redeemer so that we are able to say, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

When we reach this kind of prayer, which is a closeness of walk with God, then prayer permeates all of life. It is not a compartmentalized conception, but it flows through all that we do. Whether we're at work or at home, whether we're in joy or in sorrow, whether we're in recreation or in industry, we are still in the mood and attitude of prayer. This power then is poured out into our open hands as we hold them up to God. He will fill us in the measure of faith in which we come. The size of the container of faith that you bring to God will measure the amount of blessing that you receive. In other words, faith and prayer are twin sisters which cannot be separated. One without the other is incomplete.

How powerful is your prayer life? Is it stilted, is it warped, has it grown in the past year? Or must you confess that it has deteriorated? Or is it a healthy, vital thing that dominates your whole existence?

II

The Scripture portrays to us *The Price of Prayer.* This thing costs something! This isn't a dole that is handed out by the government of God. This matter of prayer is connected with a price. What is the price of prayer? St. Paul writing to Timothy touches upon it in these words, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." "Lifting up holy hands"—what does the Apostle mean? I believe that he is symbolizing an important fact in the figure of the Jewish attitude of prayer which, different from ours, prescribed the uplifted open hands in the attitude of prayer. St. Paul is saying that God will not pour His richest blessings into dirty hands, into sin-filled lives.

The Psalmist said the same thing: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Does that mean that sinners can't pray? No, but it means that the sediment of sin in the river of a Christian life will pollute it and will slow down the pass-

ge of God's blessing to a mere trickle. We must open the river of communication with God by dredging out the pollution of sin. Then the blessed river of God will flow with all of its joy and power and transformation into human hearts and lives. Too many wires to heaven are shortcircuited by sin. When that happens we cannot expect to know the blessing of prayer. God cannot do for us what He is able to do because we do not qualify! Are our hands holy or are they blackened with sin that should be confessed to God? This is the price of effective prayer.

Paul also said to Timothy that prayer must be without wrath. What does he mean? I believe he means that the attitudes and the feeling we have toward one another conditions our prayer life. Did you ever have a quarrel with your wife and then try to pray that night without first settling the quarrel? Was it not difficult to pray? If you were the kind of Christian you should be you would have gotten up from your knees and made restitution with your helpmeet, then returned to your knees and prayer would have flowed freely. Jesus said the same thing about worship. He said if you come to the Church with an offering and you remember that your brother has ought against you, leave the offering—don't give it, but hold it—and go seek out your brother, make restitution, and then you can really worship. The same thing is true of prayer. If there is something wrong between you and your husband or wife, or son or daughter, or brother or sister, or any relationship, that must first be cleaned up before prayer can be effective.

And St. Paul said to Timothy that prayer must be without doubt. This bears on our relationship to God. If we doubt, we cannot find the answer to prayer. Jesus said, "If any man abide in Me and my words abide in him, he may ask what he will and it shall be done." Do you not see faith written between the lines in every utterance of the scripture concerning prayer? There must be no doubt. We must expect the impossible of God. We must persist in prayer as did the "Friend at Midnight" in the Parable of our Lord. We must, if necessary, beat on the doors of heaven, without any doubt, until the answer comes, knowing that God can answer prayer and will answer prayer even though the answer isn't the one we may have wanted. Do we have holy hands? Do we have the right relationship with our fellow men? De we have the right attitude toward God?

Included in this price is also the willingness to surrender to God. Jesus said. "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." To me, one of the sad things about the American church is the decay and the slow death of the Wednesday night prayer meeting. We have 168 hours in a week and yet how few of us are willing to give 45 minutes to group prayer — to congregational prayer in the house of God! This is a touchy subject in every church, for there are so few who support the corporate prayer life of the church.

We do not realize what God could do with a church that would get on its knees in prayer—as a body, as a group—and hold up its members and hold up the sick. We would see healing power such as would make some of the cults go out of business! We are afraid of the spiritual power that is potential within the legitimate New Testament Church. We read in the second chapter of Acts that the apostles gathered regularly for prayer, that they were "steadfast in prayer." The spiritual quotient of any church can be determined by the quality of its prayer meetings. Where the prayer meetings have closed the churches, for the most part, have become social clubs. There isn't that vibrant New Testament note of real prayer, because the people will not give up an hour before a television set, or an hour at the club, or two hours in the theater, or what have you! This means, simply, that the level of spiritual life which the church can reach is in your hands and not in the hands of the minister. You say, "I'm too busy," "I have other engagements," or "I have classes at the school." And I say that if people will claim these promises of God in prayer that God will bless that church beyond anything that they can imagine.

III

In the third place, notice *The Pattern of Prayer*. Here the Apostle exhorts us to "pray without ceasing." Our society is suffering from over-ambitious people. Now ambition is at the very heart of our form of government, but there are men and women in our nation today who are literally burning themselves out in the ambition to make a career, to forge a name. to accumulate a fortune. And as a result they're paying a heavy price. Read the low death ages in the obituary column of every newspaper. We have learned how to save our labor by all kinds of devices, but we have not learned how to grasp the spiritual power that is available to us through prayer.

This is symbolized in Alphonse Daudet's

French story called, "The Man With the Golden Brain." This story is about a boy who was born with a brain of gold. He discovered it one day when he fell and struck his head on a rock. Instead of a gout of blood, he found a gout of gold. The story closes with this poor fellow caught in the web of our modern times and reaching into the recesses of his brain for the last few gratings of gold to win his career and fortune.

Segments of American society today are living out this startling French story. For we are gouging out our brains to meet the pressure and competition of today. We give but the dregs of our time, and temper, and attention to our wives and to our children. I say we're paying a heavy price because we have not learned the secret of God's pattern of prayer which is to learn to wait upon God to renew our strength. As the prophet Isaiah says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." How we need to get this pattern of prayer into our daily living. How we need to learn to claim the peace and the power of God which will flow into our lives so that we do not need to burn them out to keep up with our neighbor. Our system of government is the most desirable one, but there is a danger that, because of the freedom afforded our ambition, we will put the material things before the spiritual.

Let us learn our lesson while there is still time. Let us turn back to that little band of disciples gathered in a solitary place with their master, whose very countenance was changed by His powerful prayer, and say, "Lord, teach us to pray." As we learn the power of prayer, the price of prayer and the pattern of prayer we shall discover anew the truth of James Montgomery's well-known lines:

Prayer is the soul's sincerest desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed—
The motion of a hidden fire,
That kindles in the breast.

O Thou by whom we come to God—
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray!

Prayer In These Times

ARTHUR MERRIHEW ADAMS, Central Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York

This is a period of mounting tension, confusion and spiritual exhaustion. Yet if we are to match the hour we must have calmness, strength and clear purpose.

In all of history there is One whose calm and strength and steady purpose left an indelible mark. Naturally we will inquire how in the chaos of His times He found rest and refreshment and assured direction.

Luke, the evangelist, pictures the days of conflict, the long hours, the far-reaching decisions which pressed upon our Lord, and then, in his sixth chapter at the twelfth verse, he says, "And it came to pass in these days that He went out into the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God."

What followed the night-long vigil is well known. The twelve disciples were chosen. A great work of healing was effected. The epoch- making Sermon on the Mount was preached.

We may grant that these tremendous acts required unusual preparation. We cannot miss the implication that when we are tired and face heavy tasks, we ought to follow our Saviour out to he mountain of prayer.

He had to climb the heights. He climbed, not to reach the Father, but to get away from the distractions of the crowd. The peak was the only fit place for communion, not because God could not come down to the plain but because the atmosphere of the lowlands made it hard to be alone with Him. There is always some effort involved in prayer. It is the struggle to find a place high enough above the daily rush to be secret and quiet and undisturbed. When we are discouraged it is well to remember that the Saviour Himself once made seven efforts to get away before He found solitude. But He would not be turned away from His purpose. In days so filled with pressing duties that there was no time to eat, our Lord sought and found opportunity to be alone with the Father.

I

This was not a merely selfish exercise. We are told in the Book of Revelation (5:8) that the prayers of the saints seem in heaven like golden bowls full of incense. The mingled fragrance of human trust and love float up before the Throne, adding a new bliss to heaven's springtime. The ineffable love which through eternity had its place in the Godhead, the wonderful love which sought a wider expression through creation, and

apt all boundaries in redemption, the love f God, rests not, until it finds an answering ve in human hearts. In prayer we enter nto that communion for which the world as framed. There is joy in heaven as the olden bowls are filled.

Our Lord entered upon prayer for the ather's sake, and for those about Him. In he eighth chapter of Revelation we read ow the prayers of God's people are ming- ed with the fires of heaven and cast upon arth. Then follow voices and thundering nd lightning and an earthquake. Our feeble vords cannot shake the earth, but God waits or them sometimes, as, mysteriously, He vaits for trembling fingers to pick out the nelodies in His heart, as He waits for grop- ng minds to discover the secrets of the uni- erse, as He waits for calloused hands to ring in the harvest. We cannot have the ruits of work without toil, nor are the bless- d results of prayer to be had without inter- ession. This our Saviour knew, and He rayed much for his friends. How many astors are mighty in the word because their eople pray for them! How many boys and irls become children of God because their arents earnestly remember them and their articular needs before the Throne of grace! low many blessings come to men and wo- nen because of the prayers of their friends! Before He talked, before He chose, before He healed, our Saviour prayed.

It was a help to His friends and a service o His Father, but when we have acknow- edged this we return to the fact that our ord's yearning for the mountain had its oots in His human needs.

Rest was one thing He sought in prayer. The amazing serenity of His life on all oc- asions is evidence that He did not seek in ain. The tension between the world for vhich He stood and the world in which He noved was every day apparent, but the vorld around Him was rendered powerless o dull the edge of His assurance by hours f prayer. The problem of carrying the home tmosphere into an alien environment is loubly hard, if one return not home oc- assionally. In the Father's presence the vorld in which the basic realities of His ife were regarded with suspicion or un- elief fell away. The necessary tension be- ween truth and falsehood was relaxed in he momentary absence of falsehood. His ighted soul rested in the light.

The believer too needs this relaxation. There is high tension between the things in vhich he believes and the world in which he lives. Others question or ridicule the Christian view, or worse, men who deny Christ in their daily actions are heaped with honors, surrounded with triumphs. His own anxieties and discouragements make him wonder whether he really believes. He is like a man who has been long in a savage land telling of the beautiful country from which he has come. If he does not occasionally return, the memories will grow dim and uncertain and the doubts of those among whom he dwells will begin to possess him. He is like a missionary who has been long in a pagan country and must have occasional trips back to rest and fellowship with others of the faith. The believer needs to stay quietly in the divine presence, to let the dust of his efforts settle, that he may see the One who is directing him. This is particularly true if he is fighting a hard battle and the scene is confused. Time is not lost in which he crawls through the din to a place where he can see and hear the Captain!

Frequently he needs reassurance about his own faith. In the turmoil fleeting doubts swept through his mind, unanswered questions. On the mountain of prayer his position becomes clear. "If a million dollars were offered me—and I know what a million dollars would buy—on the condition that I deny Thee, would I accept the offer? If someone offered to double my salary for doing something offensive to thee, would I do it?" There in His presence the answer is clear, the alternative unthinkable. "But yesterday I dishonored Thee." "Was it not. my child, because you lost sight of Me?" Even a vessel at sea needs to keep in touch with the sun and the stars. A captain who looks at the changeless heavens every night will not go far wrong. The soul tossing on life's ocean will find calm and rest in the divine presence. Even the mighty Elijah at last found unbearable the tensions of a life of faith in a world of doubt. He needed to relax alone in the presence of God.

II

On the other hand, it is obvious that a man or woman who is under no tension in the world will experience a tightening pressure before God. Unbelief there is uncomfortable. Worldliness is embarrassed. For this reason, many people rarely pray.

Our Lord experienced nothing of this tension but He has a way of dealing with it. If you are more distressed than calmed in the atmosphere of prayer, if your heart is not at home there, it is better to tell Him the truth, and ask His help. Ask Him: "Create

in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." If you really prefer to be "at home" with Him, and an alien in the world, He will grant your request. Then peace and serenity will come to you through the hour of the world.

Someone will say: "I do not know why this should be. Should not a Christian walk through the world a lord of God's creation, a child of God?" Yes, there is a sense in which all things are ours. But they are ours to bring to Him. We cannot bring them to Him without tension. This is as good for us as the tension on our working muscles. Taut lines are rarely fouled. Only it is important that sometimes we let go the ropes and see that the ends go up into the hands of God Himself. When we take hold again we will be rested and serene.

And we will have more strength.

One is amazed at the freshness of our Lord on the morning after His vigil. It need not surprise us. Through the long hours He quietly absorbed power from above. A tired man lying motionless in the sun appears inactive. Actually, the cells of his body are moving into a swift rearrangement out of which will come power. So it is with the soul quiet before God; it will come forth in strength.

Think of the green waters lying under the sun in the bosom of the sea. The hours of storm when they shook the piers along the coast and tossed great liners like floating shells, the hours of furious activity are gone. They lie tranquil in the sun. Be not deceived. In such a time as this, not in the storm, their greatest powers are born. Now they are lifted above the tops of the mountains. Because of this hour Niagara and Victoria are words of wonder. Because of this hour great turbines hum at Conowingo and Hoover Dam. Cities are lighted, the wheels of industry turn, because of this quiet hour in the sun.

The vigor of men rich in devotional experience is no accident. In the hour of communion they partake of the divine Life. No wonder "the devil trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." No wonder "prayer turns the tread of half-beaten men into the tread of conquerors." Here is power, the power that whirled the universe into being, lifting high the waters of the soul, that they may sweep down in strength majestic.

And they will find the watercourses that lead safe home to the sea! Guidance is a blessing offered on the mountain of prayer. Our Lord went straight from the mountain to one of the great choices of His life.

III

What of you? Would it help to check your standards of success and measures of value and estimates of your fellows in His presence? Every boy who sees himself through his mother's eyes occasionally is the better for it. Every father who has seen himself and his world from his son's point of view is humbler and stronger. Everyone who has examined himself coolly through the eye of a stranger, a prospective employer or employee, a casual acquaintance, or an enemy, everyone is profited who has "the giftie gie him" to see himself "as ithers see him." How much more valuable it is to observe oneself and the world through God's eyes.

We know that to succeed is to keep growing and to be useful, but there are other, tempting definitions, which only wither and lose their attractiveness when we spread them before the heavenly Father on the mountain top.

We know we ought to have good will for everyone, but sometimes it is hard to maintain. We pray for Christian graces but turn with distaste from opportunities to be patient and generous and forgiving. Like interns in the hospital of life, we remain as indifferent or detached as possible in the repulsive wards until one day we see a Father's face as He bends over one of the patients.

We know we must spend precious minutes in usefulness, but it is not easy to rule out the petty and unnecessary. When we forget our morning prayer-time, much of the rest of the time seems rushed and the hours are frittered away. We need to make our plans for the day under the Master's eye. With daily training, we may learn His flawless technique but we will need His help every morning, if we are to grow.

The years before us are uncertain. What they hold no man knows, but they will be the background for at least one calm, strong person of clear purpose, if one day it may be written of you as of Him, "And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray."

rouble On The Cable

ALLYN K. WADLEIGH, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Birmingham, Alabama

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Phillip . . . and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

—John 12:20-21

We were watching one of our favorite elevision programs one evening a while ack. In the middle of the program some- ning happened to the reception. Naturally his never takes place in the middle of a soap-opera," but always in the midst of an xciting ball game or an excellent play! We ould hear words, but couldn't see any pic- ure.

On the screen were flashed these words: rouble on the cable. So we sat there peering npatiently into the snowy void, waiting or the difficulty to be eliminated. Until hat took place, try as we might we could ot get a picture. There was nothing we ould do about the cable trouble. The diffi- ulty was somewhere along the line of com- unication, and we were quite helpless to epair it.

I

This simple event got me to thinking about he subject of communication in general, and here came to mind that movement when ome Greeks came up to Philip and said, Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

And I thought, would it not be the grand- st thing imaginable if we could see Jesus? Could anything in this world compare with hat? Naturally, we could not see Him in physical sense. But we ought to be able to see" Him in the sense that we could con- act Him, could feel His presence in our veryday living, could know for certain that He was with us in our moments of joy or adness, triumph or defeat, and could know hat He is our constant Companion.

It is a basic tenet of the Christian reli- ion that there is a line of communication etween us and Jesus. There is a cable con- ecting us with Him. That cable is prayer. t is the means of contact whereby we "see" esus and are conscious of His helpful pres- nce in all that we think and do. But so many imes, try as we may, we cannot get through o Him. We cannot get a picture. He is only blur.

On television we are powerless to do any- ning, but not so in the realm of Christian ving. If there is trouble on the cable, we an fix it. If we cannot "see" Jesus, it is ur fault and not His. There are no tech- nical difficulties, no circumstances beyond our control; because Jesus is "sending" all the time, transmitting His image to you and me. The trouble is that we may well have moral and emotional difficulties that block us off from contact with Him.

I well remember that back in the days of army service I had a profound respect for the men of the communication platoons. It was their job to lay the phone lines which were the means of contact betwen company and battalion, between battalion and regi- ment. I can still see them now, patiently wending their way through snow and mud, rain and fog, unwinding the wire as they went. We lost many men from our communi- cation platoons because artillery fire was a constant hazard.

From time to time there would be breaks in the wire which had to be repaired. Out would go the communications men in search of the break, sometimes literally inching their way along the ground in the darkness until the break was found and the damage repaired. We must do a comparable task. We must find and set right the breaks in the line connecting us with Jesus. We must take a good look at ourselves, do some honest soul- searching to see what is keeping us from contact with the Master.

II

What are some of these cable troubles? First of all, there is *anxiety*. This is a com- mon emotional disorder. We borrow tomor- row's troubles and carry them today. We cross our bridges before we get to them. We bury our loved ones before they die. Anxiety is due basically to over-emphasis of the self. The individual who is all wrap- ped up in himself tends to be over-anxious about his health and his business. That sort of person forgets that Jesus told us not to be anxious about our lives, what we shall eat and drink and wear.

Anxiety renders us incapable of calm judgment and robs us of the ability to con- centrate. It makes us focus our attention on the petty, unimportant things, rather than on life's primary concerns. And so we rush hot and perspiring into God's presence and babble about this problem and that prob-

lem, afraid that we are being neglected or mistreated. We are so anxious about ourselves that we forget others and so never "see" Jesus. Anxiety is one trouble on the cable.

Secondly, there is guilt. This naturally brings up what is commonly called "sin." It always produces an uneasy conscience, and as long as the conscience is uneasy the consciousness is unable to concentrate upon the search for God.

A young man went to his doctor for a physical examination. The examination was followed by inquiry into the man's way of living. Then the doctor told the young man that unless he changed his way of life, unless he gave up certain dissolute practices, he would be an invalid. "Well," the man said, "I guess I'll be an invalid then, because I can't give up my sin."

A state of mind like that is almost incomprehensible. But compare it with another state of mind which permits us to cleave to ways of life which doom us to a spiritual invalidism, to a blindness which will never see Jesus. We need to confess our sins and rid ourselves of guilt feelings. All of us have certain skeletons in our closets, and we had better get rid of them by penitence and confession. We are sinners, not because we have killed or committed adultery or stolen, but because we are human and selfish and proud and dishonest.

Kipling said that somewhere east of Suez there was a place "where there ain't no Ten Commandments." That was a mythical spot! There is no escape from the commandments, and so our first great need is an awareness of our sins.

True, that awareness means pain, but it also means a new kind of life. Our second great need is deliverance from the guilt and remorse which follow the discovery of the real nature of what one has done and is doing.

If we are seeking for imaginative contact with Jesus, we must confess our sins and rid our minds and hearts of feelings of guilt. Failure to do so will serve only to drive us further away from Him who is the source of power and peace. So, if your cable is guilt-laden, repair it quickly.

Then, there is the matter of the *unforgiving spirit.* This too keeps us from "seeing" the Master. If the cable is broken because of our failure to forgive, then we shall never contact Jesus. You recall that He said there was to be no limit to our forgiveness. True, it is so hard to forgive; it may well be the most difficult thing that we shall eve come up against in life. But we must do s regardless of the pain involved. Of course it is easier not to forgive; easier to continu sniping and carping and maligning. Tha is more fun too — at least in some ways But it never does any good and will probably do us much harm. We know that Jesus al ways forgave. He even forgave those wh murdered Him!

If we do not forgive people for the slight and hurts they have given us, we shall neve "see" Jesus. For a mind burdened dow with hate and resentment cannot get throug to the Saviour. Someone has said that "har boring hatred against people is like burnin your house down to get rid of a rat." I does more harm than good. Resentmen ought to be disposed of like refuse. So, i you are "burned up" at someone, forget it It is hurting you more than him. And to kee unforgiveness in your heart is one sure wa of never "seeing" Jesus.

Trouble on the cable is also a result o *selfishness.* Our real "bugaboo" is that w are "number one" conscious. If we think o ourselves to the exclusion of others, we shal never receive a clear picture of the Master As Christians we are invited to give ou time, our talents, and our treasure. Christ ianity teaches that real giving is the givin of one's self. That was what made the ex ample of the Good Samaritan so admirable He gave the victim personal care and atten tion, even though it required time an money. He put his own comfort and conveni ence second.

The great law of prayer is that of selfless ness. The famed physician, Alexis Carre once said: "Generally a patient who is cur ed is not praying for himself, but for an other." Such prayer demands complete re nunciation. To do that is far harder tha it sounds! But we must try it. We mus annihilate the ego if we are to have a suc cessful prayer life.

There are so many things we must d before we can expect our prayers to b answered. We must rid ourselves of anxiety of guilt, of unforgiveness, of selfishness and of other encumbrances such as anger apathy, love of money, temptation and false hood. Any or all of these troubles on th cable will keep us from the presence o Jesus.

III

Is not our main difficulty in living a lac of communication not only with a Highe

power but also with our fellowmen? Think or a moment of the time, and money, and rouble, and sweat involved in the staging f an hour-long television show. Think of ll the problems involved! And yet we sit here in front of our sets glibly taking verything for granted. How little do we ealize the hard time that others have in rying to make our lot enjoyable and pleasnt.

Do we ever stop to think of the other an's problems? When we do, we realize hat every man has a hard job. So we ought o be more patient with one another, ought o have more compassion and charity for ur neighbor, ought to try to communicate ur feelings of love to him. Let us then be ind and decent to one another. Let us try o repair rather than to destroy. Let us ct in a positive manner rather than in a egative one. Let us try a word of thanks instead of a snarl of complaint.

We know that the men of the New Testament saw Jesus. They saw one point of light in the surrounding darkness. They caught a glimpse of God's meaning for the world and for themselves. We too wish to "see" Jesus. We too would have Him as our constant Guide and Companion. We too want more than just the hearing of His words; we too want to see His image clearly and constantly.

But is it possible? Yes, indeed it is! But if there is trouble on our cable, we must fix it quickly. We must confess that we are not perfect, that we sometimes err, that we might perhaps be at fault. We must change ourselves instead of trying to change someone else. We must rid ourselves of the moral and emotional blocks that keep us from seeing the face of the Saviour.

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Continued from page 2

Thirty brief messages on basic Christian eliefs are contained in Dr. Phillips' *Is God t Home,* a communicable, quotable and winome presentation of the fundamental tenets f faith. None of the language of tradition nd theology but much of the fervor and pirit of the gospel make these informal serionettes particularly valuable for laymen nd youth. (Abingdon, 109 pp., $1.75)

Through Gates of Splendor is a living estimony of modern discipleship. This is ull account of the five missionaries who hallenged the dread land of the Auca Inians in Ecuador with the message of hrist's redemption and fell in the line of uty. The author, Elisabeth Elliot, has colaborated with the four other widows in ecording a story, not of defeat, but of vicory, not of defeat, but of hope. This book, hich mirrors so gloriously the greatest hapters in the history of the church, makes reader both proud to belong to Christ's ellowship and ashamed of his own shallow itness. Many full-page photographs add rama to this stirring account of presentay martyrdom. (Harper & Brothers, 256 ., $3.75)

John Charles Wynn in *Pastoral Ministry Families* outlines ways by which the pasr may integrate the total program of the urch to a family-centered emphasis. In a rsuasive and convincing manner, he fers ideas that may reinvigorate the work of any church in an area where inadequacy often spells tragedy for both the church and the communicants. (Westminster Press, 214 pp., $3.75). And equally valuable is another pastoral handbook, *Where to Go for Help* by Wayne E. Oates. The author interprets the recurrent problems which pastors must meet and shows where and how information and guidance may be gleaned. This remarkable book is a directory of names and addresses and also a worthy counsellor's counsellor. The problems discussed include premartial guidance, marriage conflict, adopting children, mental illness and the problem drinker. (Westminster Press, 118 pp., $2).

Two splendid books on the Bible will enhance Bible reading and appreciation. *Getting Help from the Bible* by Charles M. Crowe discusses in an inspirational and practical manner the resources of the Bible for meeting twenty-two concrete life situations, such as "When Fear Haunts Our Days" and "When We Want to Learn How to Pray." The author has the Luccock capacity for suggesting pertinent, stimulating ideas, and this book is rich in homiletic themes and illustrations. (Harper & Brothers, 211 pp., $2.95).

A Year with the Bible by John Marsh is substantially more than an ordinary book of daily devotions. By following this guide, the reader will in a year's time have gained an understanding and appreciation of the whole Bible. A daily commentary gives meaning to the day's Bible passage. Yet each day's selection is spiritually nourishing and the book, while omitting no chapter in the

Bible, also overlooks no area of personal concern. This is a Bible lover's daily companion. (Harper & Brothers, 191 pp., $2.50).

The Kingdom beyond Caste by Liston Pope, a thoroughly competent study of race relations, gets to the fundamentals of our most urgent domestic issue, shows the origins and patterns of development and analyzes the role of the local church. "This small book is an attempt to discuss one aspect of the relation of Christ to contemporary society, and to discern the lineaments of a kingdom beyond caste, already foreshadowed but yet to come," writes the author, who does this with reasonableness, restraint and candor. (Friendship Press, 172 pp., $3).

Cross and Crisis in Japan makes very real the role of the Christian against the backdrop of modern life. This is a book of glimpses, of personalities, of past history and present times, of achievements and of possibilities. The story told by Charles W. Iglehart, veteran missionary and educator of the Japanese Christian Church, is one in which we are all concerned, as citizens and especially as Christians. Documentation, anecdotes and inspiration combine to offer a perspective of promise for the church in Japan. (Friendship Press, 166 pp., $2.50).

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Worth Quoting

Continued from page 2

advertisers call this "the pause that refreshes." Just as we need time out for physical and mental refreshment, we need a pause that refreshes us spiritually . . . .

It is well to take time out each day for "the pause that refreshes," but let us not forget the pause that not only refreshes, but recreates us — spiritually. "Be still and know that I am God." "Let us put by some hour of every day for holy things!"

Jerrine Jones

* * *

Who would have guessed that my money is really another pair of feet to walk today where Christ would walk if He were still a man on earth? Or what is my money but another pair of hands to heal and feed and bless the desperate families of the earth? What is my money but my prayer of intercession suddenly crossing time and space to help answer its own petition in one swift unselfish gesture? What is my money but my Other Self — either hard and cold and metallic, like cash in a cashbox, or warm and exciting and compassionate — tenderness in actions! It is my Christian life.

The modern world has loved money without respecting it. Money is a symbol of value and value is created by the expenditure of the priceless stuff of life. A coin is so much minted life, a holy thing, not to be handled lightly or irreverently. It is a sacramental thing, like the bread and wine of the Communion, the outward and visible sign of life fruitfully expended. That is why a bank should be a temple, and the banker a priest —a man who handles holy things. The storekeeper's merchandise is sacramental stuff congealed life. His store should be a temple and the man who sells shoddy goods defiles the temple as much as did the hucksters and money changers in the Temple in Jerusalem long ago. To the man in whom the Kingdom has come the world and all that's in it is sacramental.

Richard Roberts

* * *

There is no tainted money. There may be thousands of tainted hands that presume to use money to which they have no right, or for unholy, unfraternal, antisocial, or selfish purposes; but money itself is incapable of possesing or retaining any moral quality whatsoever. It is in itself absolutely colorless, but, like the fabled chameleon, displays the color of that with which it is associated. In the hands of evil men it is a powerful instrument of evil; in the hands of good men it acquires infinite possibilities of good. Money can be spoken of as "secular"' only when used for secular purposes, "sacred" when put to sacred uses, and "tainted" and "filthy" in the hands of tainted and filthy men.

Luther E. Lovejoy in "Stewardship for All of Life"

* * *

A clergyman reecntly wrote to a wealthy and influential businessman, requesting a subscription to a worthy charity. He promptly received a curt refusal which closed as follows: "As far as I can see, this Christian business is just one continuous give, give, give."

After a brief interval the clergyman answered: "I wish to thank you for the best definition of a true Christian life that I have ever heard."

Ken Carder

* * *

If God calls you to be a missionary, don't stoop to be a king.

Jordan Grooms

The Intellectual and Emotional Appeals in the Sermon

uggestions Based on the Psychology of Speech

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"No souls are saved by a sermon that tak- more than twenty minutes to deliver." his is an incorrect statement. It should ead, "Souls are not saved when the sermon *ems* to be more than twenty minutes long." The introduction of the idea of time lapse connection with a sermon is a convenient ay to identify success or failure of the rmon as a whole. The preacher should be ware of the passing of time. He must pace mself as a runner in a mile race. The in- oduction must orient his idea with the indset of the group and continue until ere is a sense of polarization. He must en present intellectual appeal which is ntinued until there is acceptance by the udience of his central idea. He must then ek to persuade his listeners to resolve to what he is asking them to do. He con- udes when he feels that he has projected resent attitudes into favorable future ac- on. Such a blue print demonstrates that ie length of a sermon cannot be a criterion its success. These steps may legitimately ke more than twenty minutes.

The audience should not be aware of the assing of time. The minister must create illusion of timelessness. Certainly he must e aware that the relativity of time is his ncern. Sitting on a hot stove for a minute ight seem like an hour. The audience must ot be aware of time as it passes. They must e a part of an event without time limits. here are several steps that can be taken the preparation and delivery of the ser- on that will help achieve the desired goal. so doing the sermon will be made a mean- gful factor in directing the environment those who listen.

I

The first step the minister must take is to ecide on the response that he wants from particular sermon. Preaching is to get a esponse. Each Sunday some change in con- uct is demanded on the part of the listen- rs. The change may not be great. It may be ttle more than a request for a favorable nsideration to a new project of the min- ter or officers of the church. It might be sell the idea of reading a certain book. On the other hand, it may be a request to adopt a new way of life. The success of the response demanded of the audience depends upon gaining their rapport, a oneness developed between the speaker and his audience. This rapport consists of ease and unity in the sermon; intellectual assent to the proposition presented; firing of the desires to do the thing demanded; a projection of the desire to the appropriate time when the action can be carried out.

The major mistake made is not stating the response from the point of view of the audience. Granted that most ministers who talk on sin are against it. But what about the audience? Do they know what phase of sin they are being asked to be against? Do they know what they are to do about the subject being discussed? Can they do it? The answers to these questions should be clearly affirmative in the preacher's mind before he begins his subject preparation. When he has finished his sermon, the answers to the questions should be just as clear to the listeners.

It is difficult to overstress the importance of this initial step. Regardless how small the amount, the minister is asking his audience to change conduct. A student once asked a teacher of speech, "What right do you have to change me?" It is a fair question. No minister should overlook it. So as he prepares to give his sermon he looks squarely at the request that he is going to make. Is it clear? Should the audience make the change? Can they make the change? Will it benefit them to make the change?

II

The second step the minister must take it to decide on the attitude that is likely to prevail in his congregation. When the folk gather on a Sunday morning they are usually inclined to be favorable in their attitude to the minister as an individual. This is good. But the attitude toward the subject should be different. The approach that the preacher makes to the response he desires must be fresh, provocative. This means that it should be something new to the audience. The audience should be hesitant toward this

new relationship, intellectually waiting to be convinced but not yet accepting. If the audience is already inclined to accept the idea there will be no stimulation. Consequently there will be no action. We act because we are irritated in the biological sense of that term. The biologist says that if you can't be stimulated, you're dead! Irritate the intellect! There is the purpose of the second step. If it is accomplished the resultant action has some guarantee of being consummated.

Why shouldn't a minister select a response that will be acceptable to the intellect immediately? This may sometimes be done. However, over the long pull it is imperative that we have intellectual activity if we are going to make progress. Ideas gain importance as they are weighed in the mind. The only kind of fighting which produces excellent results is fighting at the mental level. As we come to grips with ideas we produce a better result than we have had before. Minds actively at work in the audience can stimulate the speaker to better acts, even though they are not saying anything to him directly. But minds actively at work in the audience are almost certain to produce more lasting results. We can be against sin without doing anything about it. When we get intellectually stimulated we are ready to do something about it.

III

If the minister has selected a response which he expects to win from the group which is intellectually irritating, on which they will hesitate but to which they will give consideration, he is ready for the third step. The third step must wait, however, for the actual presentation of the speech. Steps one and two precede the delivery of the sermon. With them in mind the speaker chooses an introduction which he feels will polarize the group quickly around the theme that he wishes to discuss. This third step is a decision as to when the polarization has taken place and the audience is ready for the presentation of the body of the material. Every minister comes to recognize just about when this action takes place. The group becomes congealed, ready for intellectual activity. The minister has been aided by the preliminaries which have taken place in the order of service. The first step is the selection of the right response; step two is the determining of the audience attitude toward the material and the response that is requested; step three is the polarization of their attention so that they are ready for intellectual activity

IV

After these three steps, the fourth on is a real challenge to the speaker. Here h must change intellectual hesitation into in tellectual assent. This is done by the present ation of evidence that is appealing to th intelligence of the audience. Evidence is any thing that is used as a basis for proving th thesis. It consists of reasoning, as for ex ample, stating many examples and drawin a general conclusion. Evidence may be ex periences, authorities, quotations, lists o facts or statistics bearing on the problen at hand. Out of the vast amount of materia that can be gathered as evidence the min ister must select that which will seem ration al and appealing to the intelligence of th audience. The inclusion of illustration which are pertinent to the mind-set of th audience is an example of wise selection.

The audience is ready for intellectua activity at the beginning of the sermon They are alert. They want to be shown Most of them want to do the best they can Within this framework the preacher mus be reasonable. The responses demanded mus be intellectually challenging. They must b worth doing. It is easy to see, working back wards for a moment, that the ministe guarantees success of his sermon to the ex tent that he selects a response that is likel to be intellectually challenging to the group But there is a great danger that is frequent ly overlooked. The response that is to b won must be intellectually stimulating, bu the audience must be won from intellectua hesitation to intellectual acceptance with i a period of ten to twelve minutes. Here th pacing of the minister takes on a great dea of importance. The reason lies within th fatigue limits of the audience. For ten, twe lve, perhaps thirteen minutes the audienc can continue a fairly high concentration a an intellectual level. But not much longer.

If the minister as he talks sees that he ha won intellectual assent in the time allowe he still must go on. It is dangerous not to It is not good to go to the next step withou intellectual assent. "A man convince against his will is of the same opinion still." We must first assimilate one course of men tal food before being served the next course Accepting Christ as a way of life may be long time goal, one on which there is pas sive assent but no clear-cut intellectual un derstanding as to action to be pursued. S one sermon may be devoted to get activ

ellectual assent to the idea of ten minutes lay taken out of a person's busy life for editation and prayer. The minister must cide whether he can win intellectual assent thin a twelve minute intellectual presentan span.

The penalty of continuing intellectual apal too long is the fact that the audience comes conscious of the passing of time. It here that we begin to sense the hidden eaning in the statement with which this ticle opened. We are not saved if we beme in tension toward the object trying to ve us. After twelve minutes of intellectual tivity the stove gets hot very quickly.

V

The fifth step is the shift that the speaker akes from intellectual appeal to emotional peal. This statement does not imply that tellect and emotion are opposites, nor that ey are antagonistic. We sometimes are told at the intellect is good and the emotion is d. This is like saying that the head is good d the heart is bad. Intellect and emotion e the parents of our actions. We would t do more honor to one than to the other. tellect serves certain areas of our experice; emotion others. Intellect directs our tention; emotion stimulates it. Intellect akes us aware of the importance of things; notion leads us to do something about it. tellect aids us in selecting the worthy eas from the unworthy; emotion helps us ll the worthy idea to others. Intellect isotes right from wrong; emotion helps us be right. Intellect knows; emotion does.

It is easy to see the importance of this fth step. Emotional appeals must follow tellectual assent. We act because we beme emotionally aroused. A boy said he dn't want to go to Sunday School because alrealy knew how to be a lot better than was. That's a sharp distinction. We all ow in general ways that we should or uld do better. If we are intellectually connced of a particular course of action to nich we have not previously given full asnt, we can be stimulated to put into prace what we know. Such action on the part listeners is a proper change of conduct d is likely to result in permanent change. his is the goal of preaching; this is the goal each sermon.

Emotional appeals are as varied as the orld of experience. The minister has at his sposal at least the following large categries of appeals from which he can select s illustrations.

1. Experiences of others which can be made similar to the experience of the group before him.
2. Desires and drives of all the past and present which can be identified with the drives and desires of the present audience.
3. Successes and failures of those who have gone before.
4. The entire field of language as it is arranged by quotations, illustrations, anecdotes, descriptive passages and examples.
5. The whole realm of poetry.
6. What has been in the past is usable to show the audience what is to be.

How long shall this fifth step continue?

The flow of emotional stimulation continues as long as the minister feels it necessary to guarantee some success for the action he desires on the part of his audience. Here is a problem every preacher faces. On Sunday morning he is asking for a change of conduct. It is rare that such change is immediately made. Rather the preacher asks for the change to take place in the minutes ahead, the hours, days, weeks, months, even years. It is easy, relatively, to make the change desired. It may not be so easy to put into practice a request that must compete with the everyday activities which may not change. Suppose the minister asks his congregation to read a certain book as the result of his Sunday morning talk. Mr. and Mrs. A decide to read the book. They get home from the service to discover that the water was not turned off in the bath tub and has come runnnig through the house. This is cleaned up and their favorite television program is selected for relaxation, but a tube has blown. Just then the phone rings. Mrs. A's mother has had an accident and Mrs. A must take care of her. While she is gone the children come down with a mysterious malady and Mr. A is frantic. In the midst of his troubles, he gets a call from the boss saying that there is a big deal under way and his presence is needed at once in a city five hundred miles away. He must get on a plane at once.

Will Mr. and Mrs. A read the book?

To a lesser degree than the example given above every change of conduct meets with such potential blocks to the action demanded in the sermon. It is up to the preacher to decide just how long he must make the emotional appeals so as to strengthen the resolve sufficiently to overcome the normal distractions that will be in the listener's future

environment. It may take ten minutes or it may take longer. If the emotional content is well chosen the speaker has conquered time. An interesting illustration of a personal sacrifice that takes three minutes to deliver may seem like a minute to the audience. An interesting story of some conflict may destroy the concept of passing time completely. Stories about death or sacrifice, for instance, may destroy the sense of time, provided they are closely intertwined with the action that is to be done by the audience. The connection between the story and the theme must be apparent, or the audience will be insulted intellectually. They may not realize the insult, but they will react against it.

When does time begin to seem long? Mark Twain is given credit for the story of response to a missionary appeal. By the skill of the speaker Mark was led from disinterest in missions to giving his entire purse into the project. But the speaker went on! When the plate was again passed, Mark took out fifty cents.

There is a time when the audience is ready to act. It is the speaker's task to know when this happens and when it does to draw his speech to a speedy conclusion. It is, course, obvious that not everybody in t audience will reach acceptance at the sa time. Yet it is a fact that groups frequent polarize at about the same time. When t minister feels the group has reached th polarization, he concludes the fifth step.

VI

The sixth and final step is a quick sun mary, and a levelling off from the appe in terms of the group to the workada world into which the group must go. It in this workaday world that the respons takes place. This leveling may be in the for of a summary conclusion, some poetry, so story illustrating the advantages of the a tion to be taken. What the minister is tryin to do in his conclusion is to suggest ho they must act in the future, because the want to, because it is the right thing to d They have agreed that it is. They have b come fired. Now this final touch represen their decision.

This final touch for action should be sho just as this closing paragraph is short. Me tal food, well-digested, goes into positiv action which can change the world.